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BEFORE the year 1893 but little was known of modern Swedish art in this country. A few amateurs possessed works by men of this school and a few artists were acquainted with its characteristics, but the general American public discovered Swedish art at the great exposition in Chicago. As the World's Fair wanderer, with weary feet and jaded eyes, dragged through gallery after gallery of the beautiful building of Fine Arts, he stumbled by chance into some small rooms where he found himself surrounded by something new in the way of artistic expression. The novelty was sufficient to arouse a more vigorous interest which resulted in the further discovery that here was something not only unusual, but worthy of consideration. He became aware that here was an art that was unfamiliar, but one that bore such evidences of sincerity and consistency that he felt that even those peculiarities which he failed to comprehend, were the result of conscientious and faithful study from nature; that his failure to understand was not due to any fault in the works, but to his limited range of experience.

By its excellence the Swedish collection won the approval of the artists and amateurs throughout the country, and an opinion that was so strongly supported was soon adopted by the general public, though there were individuals who were frank enough to declare that the work did not appeal to them, it was so crude, strange, and unfamiliar. It was with special pleasure, therefore, that lovers of art learned that they might renew their acquaintance with Swedish paintings by means of a collection gathered together by Mr. Anders L. Zorn, and which, during the spring of the present year, was exhibited at most of the important cities of this country. As the works of a great musical composer disclose more and more of their beauties by repetition, as a favorite haunt acquires an added charm each time one returns to it, so the second examination of paintings by Swedish artists revealed points of interest undiscovered at first sight.

On entering the galleries containing these pictures, which were exhibited at Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, Boston, and Brooklyn, the first impression was that of a delightful harmony, which is somewhat remarkable in a collection of works by men and women of widely differing temperaments. This harmony and consistency was due to the fact that the art of Sweden is a strictly national expression, a reflection of the characteristics of country and climate, of popular thought and feeling. This is the true token of an art that deserves to be called national. Moreover, this harmony would not have been so

marked were it not that an important quality of Swedish art is its adherence to principles of decoration. The Swedish artist rightly believes that a painting should be something more than a mere delineation of nature by means of paint on canvas; that it should have those qualities of line and mass, of light and shade and color that work together to create a harmonious decorative effect; and as the various musical instruments of an orchestra make a musical harmony, so the assembling of many decorative units in a picture gallery should, as a whole, produce a decorative harmony.

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On examining the works of the Swedish artists one finds that they derive their inspiration from but one source, nature herself. There is no evidence of the thralldom of tradition, of custom, or even of popular taste. There is a single aim, and that is to express a truth of nature whilst endowing it with beauty and grace. The result is freshness and purity, movement and vivacity, strength and vigor that can only come from those who have a keen perception carefully cultivated and rightly used.

Though the works of such men as Wahlborn, Nordenberg, and Fagerlin of the middle part of this century show unmistakable Düsseldorf and Munich influence, there is probably no modern school which is freer from outside domination than that of the present day in Sweden. It is not maintained that an artist should not take to himself and use in his own way the best that he can gather from other schools and from the work of other men. This is sometimes done with great advantage, as some of our most notably successful and original men have shown. Such a submission to outside influence, however, cannot but have a denationalizing effect on art, though it is quite true that in its happiest results this course ends in making a man and his art universal, as in the case of Whistler.

Most of the Swedes have studied in Parisian studios, and perhaps it was there that the feeling for open-air and impressionistic effects was aroused; though it may be observed that they have adopted only the best of these styles. There is a breezy open-air quality in their works which, however, are free from the covering of purple haze that so many moderns seek to palm off as reflected light. Whilst their works are often serious, they are altogether free from the morbid tendency with which much of modern art is disfigured. Scenes of hospital interiors, of dissecting tables, and of violent death are happily absent. The work is characterized by a strong, youthful exuberance; it does not seem that the climax has yet been reached; there is a suggestion of more to come, something more mature and still more dignified.

The existence of the modern school of painting in Sweden began with the secession of the younger men from the Royal Academy in 1884, though much earnest work had been done by these same men

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before they could take so important a step as this. It is gratifying to observe that in spite of this separation from the official artistic body of the country, the National Museum in Stockholm contains a good representation of the work of the younger men.

The new Association of Artists had many friends and supporters, among whom was Mr. Furstenberg of Gothenburg, who not only sympathized with the artists, but also bought their works. As the result of his good judgment Mr. Furstenberg has a beautiful collection of modern works of art, one of the best, in fact, in Europe. There are about one hundred and sixty works in oil, water color, pastel, and in marble, bronze, and terra cotta, representing one hundred and four different men. Of this number fifty-five are Swedes; the rest are Frenchmen, Danes. Norwegians, Germans, Finns, and Dutchmen. How refreshing it is to find an amateur whose collection contains so great a proportion of excellent works by his own countrymen!

As one is shown through the dimly lighted old-fashioned halls of the Furstenberg mansion and up the winding stairway leading to the picture galleries one, by and by, seems to emerge into full daylight, to breathe more freely, to feel the exhilaration of the open air; but instead of overlooking the placid canals and copper-covered spires of ancient Gothenburg, one discovers glimpses into nature, "Hawk's Nest" by Liljefors, "Winter Landscape" by Nordström, "Flower-gatherer" by Bergh, "Mona" by Zorn, "Sunset" by Ekström, besides several charming pieces of marble and bronze by Hasselberg, Ericsson, and others. In addition to the easel pictures there are superb decorations painted expressly for the places they occupy. The chief of these, fitly contained within framework of the artist's own design and handiwork, are by Carl Larsson.

The aggregation of so many paintings done in the best modern spirit has a delightfully fresh and cheerful effect on the visitor; but the most valuable result of a visit to a gallery so admirably arranged and containing so many excellent and convincing works painted within the past twenty years, is the inspiration of confidence in the present, and hope for the future.

Other examples by the new men are to be found in Gothenburg at the Public Museum and at the Girls' School. At the latter institution there is a winding staircase, admirably adorned with decorations by Larsson, the arrangement of which is very naive and simple. There are ten or twelve panels of different shapes and sizes painted directly on the walls, the subject being Woman, her development from childhood to old age, and from prehistoric times down to the present.

Stockholm is the intellectual and artistic center of Sweden. Built on a cluster of islands, it presents a charming intermingling of bustling street with busy harbor, whose quays are bathed, some by the salt sea, some by the fresh waters of Lake Mälaren. Steamers with



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their white painted decks and glittering brasswork crowd to the very doors of the King's Palace; the tall masts of sailing vessels of all kinds almost overtop the roofs of the National Museum. The wooded hills of the outlying districts invade the city and spread out into level parks, shady lawns, and public gardens. These together make combinations that are exceedingly picturesque, so that Stockholm is an ideal home for the artist, and it is not surprising that many members of the craft spend a portion of each year in this beautiful spot.

The National Museum, whose reflection balances that of the King's Palace on the opposite side of the harbor, contains an excellent collection of works of art representing all periods and countries, and is especially complete in examples showing the development of national art. The wall spaces in the grand entrance hall are now being decorated by Larsson, and these mural decorations, when completed, will doubtless be the finest in the country.

Other excellent decorations by Messrs. Björk, Pauli, Andrén and Andersson, and Mrs. Boberg, are to be found in the principal restaurants of the city. The presence of these decorations in public places indicates a considerable degree of sympathy between the artists and the general public.

The reason for the strong national character of Swedish art is not far to seek. With a good education in the art schools at home many of the painters have gone abroad to continue their studies amongst new surroundings. But this has not been sufficient to transfer their allegiance from their own art to that of some other country; it has not been sufficient to entice them from the subjects offered by their native land. Though they have adopted such foreign culture as was beneficial to their art, their individuality has preserved them from becoming foreigners. They have returned home, with broadened experience, to paint Swedish subjects seen with Swedish eyes, and with a familiarity and insight that can only come with lifelong contact with nature.

Thus they have reproduced scenes that are peculiar to their own country and its climate: strange weird sunsets, luminous twilights, and glittering midnight skies, the deep blue ocean with sandy beach and sea-worn rocks, shimmering sunlit harbors and placid inland lakes; distant purple mountains; pine thickets peopled with elves and trolls; wild creatures of woodland and sea shore; stunted evergreens surrounding scarlet barns and cottages; picturesque cities with domes, spires, and palaces; curious village streets and cottage interiors; strong men and healthy women in their quaint national costumes. All these are painted under those atmospheric conditions that are peculiar to the country.

It is for this reason that their pictures are startling to those who have never traveled in the Scandinavian peninsula.

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It is a mistake to suppose that color is dependent on latitude; that one cannot find richness and depth of color in the northern countries of Europe. We are sometimes told that we seldom get depth of color in a northern climate, "where a hazy, moist, more or less 'thick' atmosphere weakens the rays on their way from the pigments to our retina." Judging, however, from the reports and paintings made by members of Arctic expeditions, the color effects in polar regions are of a marvelous splendor; and certainly there is no lack of pure, deep, and brilliant color in the land of the midnight sun; where, though some of the combinations are new to strangers, they are never crude and inharmonious. The long twilights, those peaceful conflicts between night and day, are responsible for many effects that are unknown in more southern latitudes.

Such facts as these should be borne in mind when we examine a collection of paintings representing a national art. We should be slow to condemn what we do not understand; we should exercise that broad and catholic spirit, in bestowing our praise or blame, that we should value in foreign criticism of true American art.

This remarkable impetus to the development of Swedish art suggests the possibilities of a similar development—necessarily on widely different lines—in the art of our own country. It leads us to hope that the time is not far distant when we shall have, in America, an art that is representative of American thought and feeling, an art that differs from that of other countries as we differ from other peoples. It suggests that the time will come when a collection of American pictures of American subjects, painted by such truly national painters as George Inness, Winslow Homer, and W. D. Tryon, shall show to lovers of art in the chief cities of the old world that there is an American art that is as typical of America as Swedish art is of Sweden.

OLD PRINTING John-a-Dreams

Consider how these old books were made. The early printers were publishers as well. They 'brought out' the books that were most in demand in their day. The reputation of most of these books was already established, they were wanted by those that loved them. They were already to be had in the costly manuscripts turned out with such care in the monasteries, and the early printer-publisher strove to duplicate the beauty and finish of these manuscripts. The more nearly he did this the better sale would he have for his books. In those days, you remember, every reader was a bibliophile, and the printer had to understand the desires and tastes of the reader, in short to be somewhat of a scholar himself. And so he was. He knew extant literature far better than most modern publishers can pretend to. He understood Latin and Greek, and the literary form of his own tongue, and beside he knew all the details of a trade, the processes of which were kept comparatively secret. He was almost a bibliomaniac with a private printing press. Books were made as Stradivarius made violins.

Learning, taste, and painstaking mechanical skill worked harmoniously together. Everything was 'hand-made,' even types. Printing was an art, not a trade.

** Those books were models of book-making for all time. Those men set a standard for making good books fit to read. They did not waste their time on any but the best books, and they made those as fine as they knew how. We have never excelled their standard, in fact, we are only now slowly coming back to it.

"Do you mean we should go back to crude hand-cast types and clumsy hand presses in order to make fine books?" asks your avis literarius.

Far from it, my soulful friend. We cannot design type faces as well as they, but we can and do of late copy theirs.

** After all it is not so much the type or the paper of these early printers I would follow so closely—though I shall ere long tell wherein even these may well be followed—but it is the spirit of their work.